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NORTON'S REMARKS

ON A

LATE PAMPHLET.

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PAMPHLET ENTITLED

“ ‘ THE LATEST FORM OF INFIDELITY ’
EXAMINED.”

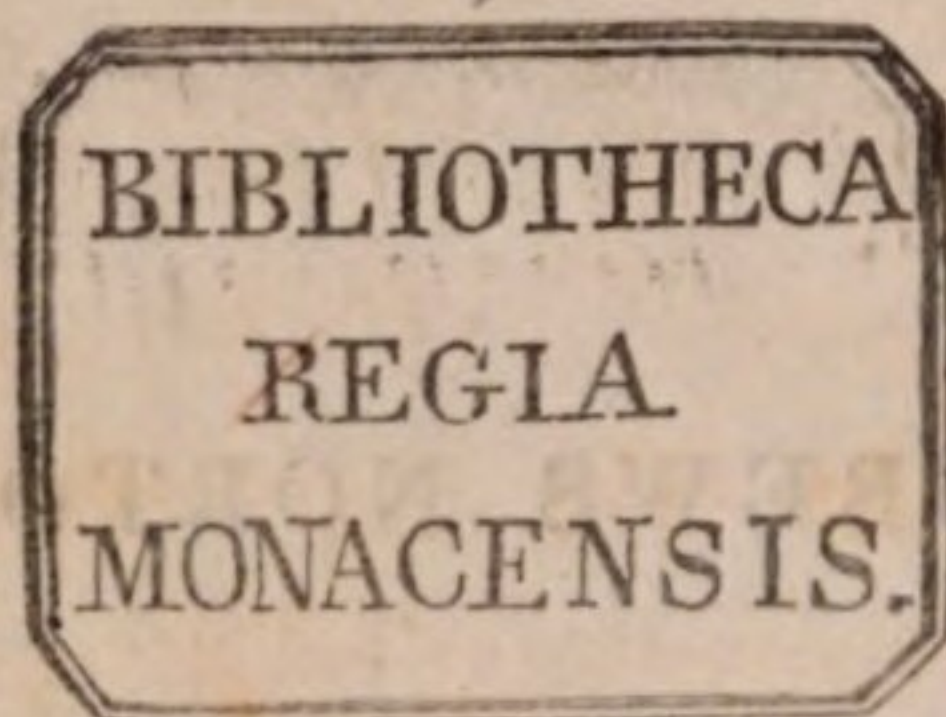
By ANDREWS NORTON.

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REMARKS.

AN anonymous pamphlet, entitled “ ‘ The Latest Form of Infidelity ’ Examined,” has lately appeared, addressed as a letter to me. It was occasioned by my Discourse, delivered before the Alumni of the Theological School at Cambridge. Had the writer confined himself to an examination of my reasoning, I should not have thought that there was any call upon me to take notice of it. But it bears throughout the character of a personal attack; and a considerable portion is expressly occupied in charging me with grave errors. These charges are urged with great confidence, and relate to such topics, that the generality of readers cannot be supposed able to judge for themselves of the correctness of what is asserted or implied. I have thought it right, therefore, to enter into some explanations, which

will enable every one to do so. It is unpleasant to engage in a discussion that has so much of a merely personal character, and is so apart from the subject to which I wished to call public attention. But it has seemed to me due to my friends, and to all who may think and feel with me on the great question at issue.

The occasion being thus presented, I shall also make a few preliminary observations, I can hardly say in explanation of the reasoning of my Discourse, but observations that may serve to show, how much that reasoning has been misapprehended by the writer of the pamphlet.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

I have said in my Discourse, (as quoted by the writer of the pamphlet,*) “that the divine authority of him whom God commissioned to speak to us in his name was attested, in the only mode in which it could be, by miraculous displays of his power;” that Christianity offers, “in attestation of the truth of the facts, which it reveals, the only satisfactory proof, the authority of God, evidenced by miraculous displays of his power;” and that “no proof of the

* p. 31.

divine commission of Christ could be afforded but through miraculous displays of God's power."

These propositions the writer of the pamphlet controverts in a long argument, and cites many authorities in opposition, as he represents, to what I maintained.* He particularly contends, that they imply a rejection of the internal and collateral evidences of Christianity, or, in other words, of all evidence, except the historical evidence. It is unnecessary to follow him in his argument; but the subject itself is important, and the truth respecting it may be made clear in a few words.

A Christian believes, that Jesus Christ claimed to be a messenger from God to men, commissioned to make known to them, by authority from God, facts of which men's reason had not given them, and apparently never could give them, assurance. His firm belief of those facts rests on his faith in Christ. But why does he believe Christ to have been commissioned by God to make them known? No one

* Among those authorities, he quotes (p. 73) one passage written by myself, to which he might have added many more. One other he gives, as supposing it written by me; but I was not the author of the Review of Verplanck's "Evidences of Revealed Religion," from which it is taken.

can be less entitled to credence than he who claims to be a special messenger from God without being able to authenticate his claims. He who affirms, that he is such a messenger, affirms that God has in him wrought a miracle; but this is a miracle of which no other human being can have cognizance, and which is not to be believed without the most decisive proof. What, then, is the proof required? Manifestly it is the attestation of God to the authority of him whom he has commissioned. A miracle of which we have no cognizance can be attested only by miracles of which we have cognizance. If the proposition be clearly stated and understood, that a miraculous revelation can be authenticated only by miracles, I am unable to perceive how it can reasonably be controverted. It is but stating, in other words, the proposition, that we can have no ground for believing in any thing miraculous, where nothing miraculous appears.

But what the proofs are, which we have at the present day, that a divine revelation, so authenticated, was made by Christ, is a very different question. There is an obvious and perfectly intelligible distinction between the evidence necessary to authenticate the fact of a divine revelation, and essentially implied in the exist-

ence of the fact, and the evidence which we may now have, that such a revelation, so stamped with the seal of God, has been actually made. Of the proofs existing at the present day the historical is first to be considered; for, if there were no historical proof, there could be no other. Even as regards the historical proof, however, many considerations concur to give it validity, which are not connected with common historical testimony. But, beside this, there is a vast amount of internal and collateral evidence. The whole history of Jesus bears an ineffaceable character of reality. It is impossible that it should have been a human fiction. The religion in its revelations and moral teachings is throughout worthy of God. In proportion as we better understand the writings of its apostles and evangelists, new evidences of its truth are continually appearing. Its reception and diffusion can be explained only on the supposition, that it was authenticated by miracles as coming from God. It has shown itself to be from God by its influence on the hearts and lives of even its imperfect disciples, and on the whole condition of civilized man. This is a most brief and imperfect enumeration, but it is unnecessary to go on. A religious philosopher can hardly make him-

self acquainted with any fact illustrating the first history and promulgation of our religion, its essential character, the opinions and condition of men before and after its introduction, or the constitution of human nature itself, without perceiving evidence of its truth. This evidence breaks upon us from many different sources ; and we may be satisfied very long before we have exhausted it. I know not that the mere intelligent reading of the Gospels, accompanied with a common knowledge of the facts concerning them, is not amply sufficient to produce a thorough conviction of the divine origin of our religion. But all the evidence of which I have spoken, so vast in amount and so various in its character, bears upon one point alone ; — that a revelation from God to men, authenticated by miracles, was made through Jesus Christ.

I state these considerations on account of their intrinsic importance. It is not worth while particularly to point out their bearing upon the different erroneous representations given of my opinions by the writer of the pamphlet.

But I may here observe, that there is a mode of speaking of the internal evidence of Christianity, which, strange as it may appear, goes

to destroy the worth of all evidences of Christianity, as a revelation from God.

It is said, that the truths of religion are directly perceived by the mind; that they neither require, nor admit of, any additional evidence; but that these truths are the truths of Christianity, and, therefore, that there is a direct perception of the truth of Christianity. These propositions embody opinions which are the basis of some modern systems of religion.*

I answer, that a truth is the expression of a fact. With this understanding, it is not necessary to dwell on the metaphysical absurdity of supposing the direct perception of facts existing neither in the sensible world, nor in our own minds; as the fact, for example, of man's immortality. This will be obvious to every one accustomed to think clearly. But, taking a more popular view, we may say, that the propositions laid down would seem to have been framed by one who knew nothing of men as they had been, or as they existed around him, and who was speculating on the imaginary inhabitants of some other planet. What correct and assured belief of the fundamental truths of

* Those, for example, of Fries and, as will hereafter appear, of his follower, De Wette.

religion existed among the great mass of mankind before Christianity? How much belief of those truths now exists, which is not to be traced to the influence of Christianity? In how large a number, in any Christian country, does it exist beyond the sphere of those who rest their faith on Christianity as a revelation from God?

But it is further to be observed, that this pretence of placing Christianity upon unassailable ground, upon what is called, falsely, its internal evidence, — this theory, that the facts which it reveals are directly perceived by the mind, — is utterly inconsistent with any belief in Christianity as a revelation from God. No rational man can suppose, that God has miraculously revealed facts, which the very constitution of our nature enables us directly to perceive.

I have said all that seems to me necessary with regard to the reasoning of the pamphlet under notice, and will now proceed to matters of a personal nature. Some interest may, perhaps, attach to these from the explanations respecting various subjects to which they will give occasion. The charges of error made against me relate to Spinoza, Schleiermacher, and De Wette. I shall consider them in this order; and first of

SPINOZA.

I spoke of Spinoza as an atheist. The writer of the pamphlet says, that this was an early prejudice, but that it is one to which “few scholars, conversant, even in a slight degree, with philosophical studies, would now give their sanction ;” * and, after various professed quotations from Spinoza, further says, that I “shall now perceive, that he was not an atheist, in any sense ; nor a pantheist, in the sense in which that word is commonly used.” †

The system of Spinoza has been talked of by many, who apparently have known little concerning it, and mistaken its character. Hence we find such notices of it as some of those collected from different authors by the writer of the pamphlet. ‡ I shall endeavour, therefore, to give a correct account of what alone concerns us at present, or, indeed, is in itself of much interest, — his conceptions respecting God.

According to Spinoza there is but one substance existing. This is possessed of infinite attributes. All the phenomena of what we call the created universe, that is, all finite beings,

* Pamphlet, p. 120.

† p. 125.

‡ pp. 126 seqq.

with their properties, acts, and affections; with their moral qualities, good or bad; with their joys and sufferings, are but modifications of the attributes of this sole substance, or, in other words, of this substance itself. This substance has existed from eternity. It could be produced by no other; for one substance cannot produce another; — creation is impossible.* It is “the *immanent* cause of all things, not a *transitive* cause.”† These terms are technical and require explanation. An *immanent* cause is that which produces effects only in or upon itself. A *transitive* cause is that which passes out of itself, as it were, to produce, or to act on, something else. The sole substance of the universe is the God of Spinoza; and in the exposition of his system he early begins to denote it by that name.‡

To this substance, considered in itself, distinct from the effects produced by it in itself, and as the cause of those effects, he gives the name also of *Natura naturans*, which may be explained by the equivalent term, *causal Nature*; while to the modifications produced by

* These principles are stated in the first fifteen propositions of the First Part of his Ethics, in which Part he treats of God.

† Ethics P. I. Prop. 18. — Opp. II. p. 54, ed. Paulus.

‡ This name is first given to it in the eleventh proposition.

it in itself, that is, to the phenomena of the universe, he gives the name of *Natura naturata*, for which we may substitute *phenomenal Nature*.*

To this substance considered in itself, to his *Natura naturans*, that is, to his God, *regarded as the cause of all things*, he expressly denies both intellect and will, and argues at length against ascribing them to God. "I will show," he says, "that neither intellect nor will belong to the nature of God."†

But, though this denial of intellect to the

* As this is an important point in his theory, I quote the passage at length in which he explains his views.

"Antequam ulterius pergam, hic, quid nobis per Naturam naturantem et quid per Naturam naturatam intelligendum sit, explicare volo, vel potius monere. Nam ex antecedentibus jam constare existimo, nempe, quod per Naturam naturantem nobis intelligendum est id, quod in se est et per se concipitur, sive talia substantiæ attributa, quæ æternam et infinitam essentiam exprimunt, hoc est, Deus, quatenus, ut causa libera, consideratur. Per Naturatam autem intelligo id omne, quod ex necessitate Dei naturæ, sive uniuscujusque Dei attributorum sequitur, hoc est, omnes Dei attributorum modos, quatenus considerantur, ut res, quæ in Deo sunt et quæ sine Deo nec esse, nec concipi possunt." — *Ethics* P. I. Prop. 29. Schol., pp. 61, 62.

By *causa libera* Spinoza means nothing more than a cause unconstrained by any other; as he explains in the demonstration of the seventeenth proposition of the First Part, and in the corollaries to it, pp. 51, 52.

† "Ostendam, ad Dei naturam neque intellectum, neque voluntatem pertinere." *Ibid.* Prop. 17. Schol., p. 52.

Deity is a fundamental characteristic of the system of Spinoza, there are other positions in his system, which seem at first view irreconcilable with it. Whatever may be the number of the divine attributes, Spinoza supposes that but two can be known by man, and these two are infinite extension (extension being considered by him as the essence of matter*) and infinite thought.† In the Second Part of his Ethics, (in which, it may be observed, he is professedly treating not of God, but of the human mind,) he says, "Thought is an attribute of God; or God is a thinking thing," (*res cogitans*.)‡ He says, that God understands or knows himself, (*seipsum intelligit*.)§ He repeatedly speaks, in this Part and elsewhere, of the intellect of God. And what is remarkable, he makes no express attempt to reconcile these apparent contradictions. But the solution which he does afford, without expressly recognising the contradiction, is altogether consistent with his denying intellect to God, considered as the cause of all things.

This solution, I shall first state in my own

* See particularly the scholium to the fifteenth proposition of the First Part of his Ethics.

† These alone are specified in his Ethics; and that these alone can be known, he says in his 66th Letter. Opp. I. pp. 673, 674.

‡ Ethics P. II. Prop. 1. § Ibid. Prop. 3. Schol., et alibi.

words, thus: All nature, the universe, considered as an effect, consists only of infinite modifications of the one infinite substance, the God of Spinoza. But whatever may be affirmed of the modifications of any being, may be affirmed of that being itself. *Phenomenal Nature* (*Natura naturata*) is equally God as *causal Nature*. Now in the infinite universe there is infinite thought and intellect, and a knowledge or understanding of God (for according to Spinoza, there is nothing else to be known or understood but God *); and all this may be predicated of God, considered not as a cause, but as *phenomenal Nature*. I shall now quote to this effect the words of Spinoza himself.

“*Actual* intellect,” he says, (“not that I allow,” he adds in a scholium, “the supposition of any *potential* intellect,”) whether finite or infinite, as also will, desire, love, &c., must be referred to *phenomenal Nature* (*ad Naturam*

* “Intellectus actu finitus, aut actu infinitus, Dei attributa Dei-que affectiones comprehendere debet et nihil aliud.”—Ethics P. I. Prop. 30. Spinoza here, as elsewhere, uses *debet* in the sense of *must*, as implying logical necessity. Thus he begins the demonstration of this proposition with saying; “Idea vera debet convenire cum suo ideato.”

I add the forty-seventh proposition of the Second Part (p. 120.): “Mens humana adæquatam habet cognitionem æternæ et infinitæ essentiæ Dei.”

naturatam) not to *causal Nature* (nec vero ad naturantem.) *

This ascribing of intellect to *phenomenal* and not to *causal Nature* is a main point in the system of Spinoza; and from ignorance of it, or inattention to it, I suppose his doctrine concerning God to have been often misunderstood. I shall, therefore, produce other passages to the same effect as that just quoted.

“Will and intellect have the same relation to God as motion and rest, and generally as all natural phenomena (*omnia naturalia*), which are necessarily determined by God to exist and operate in a certain manner.” †

“Will does not more pertain to the nature of God than other natural phenomena, but has the same relation to it as motion and rest, and as all other natural phenomena.” †

That is, will and intellect may be affirmed of God, only as motion and rest may be affirmed of him; that is, only of God considered as *Natura naturata*, phenomenal Nature.

In the Second Part of his Ethics, there are many passages, that involve the main idea of the following.

* Ethics P. I. Prop. 31., p. 62.

† Ibid. Prop. 32. Coroll. 2., pp. 63, 64.

“A knowledge of whatever takes place in the human mind necessarily exists in God, so far as he constitutes the nature of the human mind.” *

Though the expression of the following is in some respects obscure, it is clear as regards our present purpose.

“It appears that our mind, considered as intelligent, is an eternal mode of thought, which is limited by another eternal mode of thought, and that again by another, and thus to infinity, so that, altogether, they [that is, human minds, or minds like the human,] constitute the eternal and infinite intellect of God.” †

“I think,” he says, in a letter to his disciple de Vries, “that I have clearly and evidently shown that intellect, though infinite, belongs to *phenomenal* and not to *causal Nature*.” ‡

* P. II. Prop. 12. Demonstr., p. 88. Conf. Prop. 11. Coroll.; Prop. 38. Demonstr.; Prop. 40. Demonstr.; Prop. 43. Demonstr.; P. III. Prop. 1. Demonstr.

† “Hæc sunt, quæ de Mente, quatenus sine relatione ad Corporis existentiam consideratur, ostendere constitueram: ex quibus et simul ex Prop. 21. p. 1. et aliis apparet, quod Mens nostra, quatenus intelligit, æternus cogitandi modus sit, qui alio æterno cogitandi modo determinatur et hic iterum ab alio et sic in infinitum; ita ut omnes simul Dei æternum et infinitum intellectum constituent.” — P. V. Prop. 40. Schol., p. 297.

‡ “Quod autem ad rem attinet, puto me satis clare et evidenter demonstrasse, intellectum, quamvis infinitum, ad Naturam natu-

There is no doubt, therefore, that Spinoza denies to his God, considered as the cause of all things, both intellect and will. I shall now state his further positions concerning God, so considered.

All phenomena in the universe are the result of an inevitable necessity; of the necessary operation of the laws of the divine Nature, or, in other words, of causal Nature. Nothing could be otherwise than as it is.* Spinoza, himself, does not explain what are the laws of this Nature, divested of intellect and will. But there is only one answer which the question admits. They must be the laws according to which the phenomena of the universe actually are produced; that is, what we call the laws of nature; — these laws being supposed to have intrinsic power, and the laws of the moral world to act with as inevitable necessity as the laws of the physical.

With these principles, Spinoza proceeds to deny that there is any benevolent purpose in Nature, that his God proposes to himself any purpose, or that there is any plan in the uni-

ratam, non vero ad naturantem pertinere." — Epist. 27. Opp. I. p. 524.

* Ethics P. I. Prop. 33, pp. 64 seqq.

verse.* These suppositions would evidently be wholly irreconcilable with his principles. "Men commonly suppose," he says, "that all things in nature act for some end, like themselves; and even maintain, as indubitable, that God himself directs all things to some certain end."† He first undertakes to explain the origin of this prejudice, and then to prove its falsity. "The prejudice," he says, "has become a superstition, and struck its roots deep into men's minds. Hence every one strives earnestly to understand and trace out the final causes of all things. But in endeavouring to show that nature does nothing in vain, (that is, nothing but for the use of men,) they seem to have shown only that nature and the Gods are as foolish as men."‡ He commences his second head by saying; "Not many words are necessary to show, that Nature proposes to itself no end, and that all final causes are nothing but human figments."§

"The opinion of those who subject all things," to what Spinoza calls "a certain indifferent will of God, and maintain that all things depend on his good pleasure, is less wide from the truth," he says, "than that of those who main-

* P. I. Appendix, pp. 68–76. Conf. P. IV. Præf., pp. 200, 201.

† Appendix, p. 69.

‡ Ibid. p. 70.

§ Ibid. p. 71.

tain that God does all things with reference to good." *

This is the system which I called atheism; but which the writer of the pamphlet, doubtless through a mistake of its character, affirms, that "no one who understands the subject will accuse of an irreligious tendency, it being religious even to mysticism;"† and which Cousin, whom he regards as an authority, describes as "a mystic hymn, an ejaculation of the soul toward the Supreme Being."‡

A few remarks remain to be made on the statements in the pamphlet, concerning this subject.

The system of Spinoza cannot be understood without understanding the meaning of the terms in which he defines the causality ascribed by him to that substance which he calls God. A knowledge of the meaning of these terms is as necessary to comprehend him, as a knowledge of the terms *sine* and *tangent* in studying the properties of the circle. I have already explained them. "God," according to Spinoza, "is the immanent cause of all things, not a transi-

* P. I. Prop. 33. Schol. 2, p. 67.

† Pamphlet, p. 126.

‡ Ibid. p. 130.

tive cause ;” * that is, a cause acting on itself, and not one producing, or acting on, any thing out of itself. This proposition is quoted by the writer of the pamphlet with the insertion of two other epithets (not in the original †) in the following terms : “ God is the permanent and indwelling cause of all things, not the transient and temporary cause.” ‡ By translating *immanens*, “indwelling,” its essential meaning is changed. An *indwelling* cause acts on something not itself, — that in which it dwells. A common acquaintance with the Latin language might not have prevented the writer from rendering *immanens* by “indwelling”; but it might, as one would think, have prevented his giving “transient,” as the meaning of *transiens*. By these two errors, and by the insertion of the epithets “permanent” and “temporary,” he makes Spinoza affirm, what no Christian theist will controvert, that “God is the permanent and indwelling cause of all things ;” and to deny, what surely was never maintained, “that God

* “Deus est omnium rerum causa immanens ; non vero transiens.” — P. I. Prop. 18, p. 54.

† These additional epithets are as little to be found in the 21st of Spinoza’s Epistles, from which also the writer of the pamphlet (p. 123) professes to quote them.

‡ Pamphlet, p. 122.

is the transient and temporary cause of all things." This fundamental error appears not only in his professed rendering from the Latin of Spinoza; but, what I cannot account for, in a professed translation from the German.*

In my Discourse I mentioned an account which Le Clerc says he had from a person of credit who had stated to him the fact in writing. The writer of the pamphlet says, respecting it,

"The idle story which you quote from Le Clerc, that Meyer induced Spinoza to substitute the word God for Nature, where the former now appears, is without foundation. Even if it had more satisfactory external evidence for its support, it would be contradicted by the whole spirit of Spinoza's writings. The substitution of the word Nature for God could not now be made without destroying his system."†

This passage is hardly important enough for notice. But the following extract may throw some further light on the opinions of Spinoza.

"I have shown," he says, "in the Appendix ‡ to my First Part, that Nature does not act for any end. For that eternal and infinite being which we call God or Nature acts by the same necessity by which it exists." — "The reason, therefore, or cause, why God or Nature acts,

* Pamphlet, p. 129.

† Ibid. p. 123.

‡ See the citations from this Appendix, before given, p. 19.

and why it exists, is one and the same. As it exists for the sake of no end, so it acts for the sake of no end.”*

Any further quotation to show the error of the writer of the pamphlet would be superfluous. What has been before said is, indeed, sufficient to make it evident.

It is not necessary to go through his remarks in order to particularize other misconceptions of the system of Spinoza; but there is one professed extract from him of a character not to be passed over without notice. The following is given as a quotation from Spinoza.

“The intelligence and will which we should regard as constituting the essence of God, must differ entirely from human intelligence and will. The intelligence of God, so far as it is conceived as constituting the essence of God, is indeed the cause both of the essence and of the existence of the Universe. The intelligence of God, then, is the cause both of the essence and the existence of our intelligence; and must therefore differ from it, as that which is caused differs from its cause, namely, in that which it receives from its cause.†”

* “Ostendimus enim in Primæ Partis Appendice Naturam propter finem non agere; æternum namque illud et infinitum Ens, quod Deum seu Naturam appellamus, eadem, qua existit, necessitate agit.” — “Ratio igitur, seu causa, cur Deus, seu Natura agit et cur existit, una eademque est. Ut ergo nullius finis causa existit, nullius etiam finis causa agit.” — *Ethics* P. IV. *Præfatio*, p. 200.

“† *Ethica*, pars i. prop. xvii.” Pamphlet, pp. 124, 125.

This passage, which is adduced to prove that Spinoza ascribes intelligence and will to God, is composed of sentences, altered from the original, which have been taken from a portion of his work before referred to, in which he says, "I will show, that neither intellect nor will belong to the nature of God,"* and then proceeds in his proof of this proposition. I will explain, as far as is necessary, the course of his argument, and show how the passage is constructed, which is given as an extract from him.

"If intellect and will belong to the eternal essence of God," says Spinoza, reasoning against the supposition, "something must be understood by each attribute different from what men commonly mean. *For the intellect and will which would constitute the essence of God must differ entirely from our intellect and will*; nor can there be any correspondence between them except in name; that is, no other correspondence than exists between the constellation called the Dog, and a dog a barking animal; which I will thus prove."†

The words italicized being part of a passage

* P. I. Prop. 17. Schol., pp. 52-54. See before, p. 13.

† Ibid. p. 53.

in which Spinoza is laboring to prove, that we cannot ascribe intellect and will to the Deity in any intelligible sense of the words ; that is, that we cannot reasonably ascribe them to the Deity at all, is thus quoted, with an interpolation, in the pamphlet before us, as expressing his opinion, that we should ascribe intelligence and will to the Deity.

“The intelligence and will which *we should regard* as constituting the essence of God, must differ entirely from human intelligence and will.”

After the words which I have last quoted from Spinoza, he thus proceeds to the proof of what he had affirmed in those words. I shall give this proof in an abridged form.

“If intellect, says Spinoza, “belongs to the divine nature,” then, “as God is prior in causality to all things,” all things are what they are because the conceptions of them, such as they are, existed in the divine intellect. “*Consequently the intellect of God, so far as it is conceived of as constituting his essence, is truly the cause of things, both of their essence and existence ;* which seems to have been observed by those, who have asserted that the intellect, will, and power of God are one and the same.” But “*an effect,*” he continues, “*differs from its*

cause precisely in that which it has from its cause." I omit his argument in proof of this strange proposition, as foreign from our purpose. But having, as he conceives, established it, he goes on. "*But the intellect of God,*" (according to the supposition that intellect belongs to God,) "*is the cause of the essence and existence of our intellect, therefore the intellect of God,* so far as it is conceived of as constituting the divine essence, *differs from our intellect,* both as respects its essence and its existence; and can correspond with it in nothing but in name. Which it was my purpose to prove. The same reasoning, as every one will readily see, applies to will," as ascribed to God.

Here the argument concludes. It was of course the purpose of Spinoza to prove the proposition which he had laid down at its commencement, that "neither intellect nor will belong to the Divine Nature." I have again italicized the passages which go to form the last two sentences of the professed quotation from Spinoza given in the pamphlet. Words, it will appear, have been put together, so as to make him express the direct opposite of that for which he is contending.

The account which I have given of the system of Spinoza may be of some interest, as almost

every one has heard of his name. There are few writers, — none, perhaps, of the same period, — who have had so much influence upon the infidel philosophy and theology of Germany.

As respects the authors, whose opinions concerning his system the writer of the pamphlet has quoted, there is none of them, even including Tennemann, whom, for myself, I should regard as an authority on the subject. I have not examined the quotations to see whether they are correctly made; and this is a point, which, as may appear from what has been already shown, is not to be assumed.

I proceed to what is said by the writer of the pamphlet respecting

SCHLEIERMACHER.

His remarks relate to my account of Schleiermacher's "Discourses on Religion." In the passage * on which he comments, I have given a brief abstract of some of the more remarkable positions in that work, — positions which appeared to me, as they must to every Christian, wholly irreligious. The only proper answer to

* Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity, pp. 43 seqq.

my account, supposing that it admitted of an answer, would be to compare it with the book itself, and to show, that what I affirmed that book to contain was not to be found in it. But this is not attempted. No error in my account is specified. The most obnoxious of the doctrines which I have mentioned are unequivocally taught in Schleiermacher's work. Should any one expressly assert the contrary, it would be of little consequence what he might afterward assert or deny. Nor, if the book were easily accessible in English, would any one venture to make such remarks on my account of it as are found in the pamphlet under notice. Those doctrines are not inculcated incidentally or apart, so as not to enter into the main purpose of the author. It would be absurd to suppose this of a work, treating only of religion, and in which the Discourse, that all my quotations were taken from, treats "Of the Essence of Religion."* On the contrary, they are characteristic features of the system of pantheism developed in the work. The writer of the pamphlet, indeed, indirectly asserts in one passage, that I am in error in charging Schleiermacher with denying the doctrines of a personal God, and personal im-

* Its title is "Ueber das Wesen der Religion."

mortality.* I made no charge of this kind against him, except by simply reporting what is found in his Discourses. Any error I committed must be in this report. His words imply, therefore, that I committed an error in quoting what Schleiermacher says of a personal God and personal immortality ; but I trust I do him (whoever he may be) no more than justice, when I say, that his words imply what he would not directly assert.

The views of religion given in Schleiermacher's book I adduced as exhibiting a system drawn up by a professed Christian, and left it to my readers to judge what resemblance they bore to Christianity. Of the author, or his opinions, I gave no further account, except that I classed him with unbelievers in Christianity as a miraculous revelation. If I correctly stated the doctrines maintained in his Discourses, every reader can determine for himself whether or not he is to be regarded as a Christian, in a proper sense of the word.

It may seem, therefore, as if nothing more were to be said on the subject. But the writer of the pamphlet, without directly denying the

* "You charge the author with denying the doctrine both of a personal God and of personal immortality. You were probably led into this error," &c. — Pamphlet, p. 135.

correctness of my account of Schleiermacher's work, introduces a series of remarks and assertions, the purport of which is to produce the impression, that I have in some way misrepresented him; that he was a "strenuous advocate of the supernatural origin of Christianity;" that "his whole life was a controversy against the Rationalist school,"* and that he was a believer "in a perfect revelation through Christ," to which "the revelation of God in nature, and in the human soul, is only a preparation."† Of these remarks and assertions, it is necessary to my purpose to take some notice.

"You attempt," says the writer of the pamphlet, "to support your allegations by the citation of detached passages from one of Schleiermacher's earliest writings, without the qualifications which guard them where they stand, and without any reference to his subsequent productions, in which his theological views are more fully and distinctly expressed. In this way, you have presented an erroneous idea of his position as a theologian, and treated with injustice the character of one of the most sincere and exemplary men, who have ever devoted their lives to the service of truth."‡

If by "detached passages" the writer of the pamphlet means passages expressive of doctrines that do not enter as fundamental propositions

* Pamphlet, p. 139.

† Ibid. p. 142.

‡ Ibid. pp. 131, 132.

into the system of Schleiermacher, what he states is a grave error. Of what qualifications or explanations such doctrines may admit, it would be hard to conjecture, and he nowhere throws any light on the subject. I shall have occasion hereafter to recur to it. At present, I shall take notice only of the representation, that the "Discourses on Religion" were one of Schleiermacher's earliest writings, and, therefore, as is implied, that it is unjust to quote them in evidence of his settled opinions.

It might be sufficient to say, that I entered into no history of Schleiermacher's opinions, and quoted his Discourses only to show what sort of a substitute had been proposed for Christianity. But a further answer is to be given. The facts respecting the book are these. It was originally published in 1799, when the author was thirty years old. In 1806, a second edition appeared, in the Dedication of which the author professes to have revised it throughout, for the purpose, among others, of removing all occasion for the gross misunderstandings to which it had been exposed, causing him to be represented as a fanatic by infidels, and an unbeliever by bigots. In 1821, a third edition was published, again revised, with many changes of expression, and accompanied

with copious notes, to explain more fully the writer's opinions. And in 1831, three years before his death, a fourth edition was issued, being that which I used. In the Preface to the third edition, (which is retained, without any additional notice, in the fourth,) he again refers to "the numerous and in part very wonderful misconceptions" of his meaning, and to the consequent charges of atheism and mysticism, which had been brought against him, "almost in the same breath." He had likewise been charged with inconsistency between this and his other writings. But he says, that his "mode of thinking on the subjects in question had remained unchanged (since the publication of the work), except that, with years, it had acquired greater maturity and clearness in its form." It is unnecessary to say any thing further respecting the implication, that this work should not be used in evidence of his opinions, because it is one of his earliest writings.

But there are other reasons given, why it should not be thus used. They occupy several pages,* but they are not stated clearly, nor brought definitely to bear on the point for which they are alleged. I was mistaken, it is

* Pamphlet, pp. 132 seqq.

said, in regarding the work as elaborate or systematic. "Nothing could have been further from the author's intention, than to present any thing like an elaborate or complete system of speculative doctrine." It is "filled with bursts of impassioned eloquence," — "expressly disclaiming all pretensions to an exposition of doctrine." I have fallen into "a misapprehension of the design of the book," which "an accurate knowledge of the literary history of the period, in which it was written, would have prevented." And the inference to be made is, that, if I had understood the occasion, design, and character of the work, I should not have made use of it as I have done. It is admitted by his admirer, Lücke, and, one would suppose, admitted by the writer of the pamphlet, for he quotes Lücke's words as if adopting them, that it does present "the appearance of pantheism, and here and there a decided expression of it";* and I repeat, that it does teach the other connected doctrines, which I have formerly stated. But it is alleged, that, when it was first written, infidelity generally prevailed in Germany, and what there was of religion was of the poorest kind. The author "felt himself

* Pamphlet, p. 136.

impelled to go forth" — "for the restoration of religion ; to present it in its most sublime aspect, free from its perversions, disentangled from human speculation, as founded in the essential nature of man, and indispensable to the complete unfolding of his inward being."* And, therefore, — for this is the conclusion which the writer of the pamphlet is maintaining, — the book is not to be taken for an exposition of his opinions concerning religion. "In order to recognise every thing which is really religion among men, and to admit even the lowest degrees of it into the idea of religion, he wished to make this as broad and comprehensive in its character as possible."† And, therefore, when he asserts the doctrine of personal immortality to be an irreligious doctrine, and maintains, that religion consists only in the sense of the union of the individual with the One and All, we must regard him as but striving to make the idea of religion as broad and comprehensive in its character as possible.

But the main argument against the use made by me of Schleiermacher's book, — an argument, however, rather implied than expressly stated, — is, that the doctrines I quoted from it are explained in the notes to the third edi-

* Pamphlet, p. 133.

† Ibid.

tion. To complete the argument, it must be understood, that they are so explained as to give his language a sense different from what appears at first sight. Schleiermacher was skilled, when he so wished, to obscure his meaning, and to palter with words used in senses very remote from their common import. It has been said, that the signification of his name, Schleiermacher, that is *Veil-maker*, expressed his character. But I do not perceive, that he explains away, in those notes, what I quoted from his text; — a text, which, as it appears in the third and fourth editions, was in the most obnoxious passages carefully revised, with various alterations and softenings of expression. Had such a process been carried on, as the writer of the pamphlet represents; had Schleiermacher taught irreligion in his text, and explained it into religion in his notes, the readers of the pamphlet might reasonably have desired to see some specimens of his manner of interpretation. I will quote what is said concerning the subject in the following very remarkable passage, which I give with the *capitals* used by the writer of the pamphlet.

“I regret, that the explanations referred to are of such a length as to forbid their insertion in this place. It may be seen, however, from the following extract,

that the conceptions which Schleiermacher renounces as essential " [the sense obviously requires " unessential "] "to religion, are only those which are taken from human and earthly relations, and which consequently pervert every spiritual idea of God and immortality. 'As the conception of the HUMAN personality of God usually presupposes a consciousness that is not morally pure, the same thing may be assumed in the conception of immortality, which represents it after the manner of the Elysian fields, only as a new earth of greater beauty and extent. And as we must admit an essential difference between the inability to form such a HUMAN and PERSONAL conception of God,' [*verbally*, "to conceive of God as in such manner personal,"] 'and the denial of the existence of a LIVING GOD, — which last alone can be designated as atheism; in like manner, he who does not incline to such a MATERIAL CONCEPTION of immortality, is very far from discarding the GENUINE HOPE of immortality. And as we may call every man religious, who believes in a LIVING GOD, we may also call every one religious, who believes in the EVERLASTING LIFE OF THE SOUL, without wishing to define the way or the manner, in which it must be conceived.'* "

Schleiermacher, then, was a believer in the Living God, and in everlasting life. He had a just view of the importance of these doctrines. He regarded them as essential to religion. His only purpose was, to free them from debasing conceptions derived from things human and earthly. But this is directly contradictory to

* "Reden, p. 141." Pamphlet, pp. 137, 138.

my statements concerning the opinions maintained by him in the book in question. What account is to be given of the matter?

The account to be given is, that language cannot be used more deceptively than it is in the passage I have quoted from the pamphlet. The impression which every unsuspecting reader must receive is, that Schleiermacher regarded the personality of the Deity as a fundamental truth of religion. He denied, indeed, his *human* personality. The phrase may not be well understood, but if trust be reposed in the writer of the pamphlet, it will be thought to mean, that Schleiermacher, maintaining the personality of God, only rejected certain erroneous conceptions connected with it, founded upon some supposed analogy to human imperfection. To one who examines for himself, and attends closely to the meaning of words, it will indeed be evident, that personality is but of one kind, admitting no modifications or degrees; that the word must have the same meaning, whether used of man, or an angel, or the Divinity; that consequently to deny *human* personality to God, or personality like that of man, is to deny a personal God; and that, in the phrase "human personality," if the qualifying word "human" have any meaning, and be not merely used as a

disguise, it must be intended to imply, that personality, so far as our knowledge extends, is the attribute only of finite beings, like man. Three pages before the passage quoted from him, Schleiermacher says ; “ As it is so difficult to conceive of a personality truly infinite and impassible, a great difference should be made between a personal God and a living God. It is the latter conception alone, which properly forms a separation from *material* pantheism and blind atheistic necessity.” * In his Discourses, (as I have formerly mentioned,) both in the text and notes, he reasons against the supposition, that the belief of a personal God is essential to religion. I will add but one quotation, to show further his views on the subject.

“ I am firmly convinced, that, through what has been said, the conception of the personality of God will not become more uncertain to any one who holds it, nor will any one be better able to free himself from the almost unalterable necessity of adopting it for his own, because he knows why he lies under this necessity. Among truly religious men there never have been zealots, enthusiasts, or fanatics for this conception ; and, so far as by atheism is meant, as is often the case, nothing more than a shrinking back

* Reden über die Religion, p. 138.

from it, and doubt concerning it, a truly pious man will regard the charge with great tranquillity.”*

But, it may be asked, does not the passage at least prove, that Schleiermacher, at the time of writing it, regarded the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, in the common sense of the words, as an essential doctrine of religion? I answer, that Schleiermacher, by the term, “the everlasting life of the soul,” expresses a conception, which would never enter the mind of a reader unacquainted with his use of it. Religion, according to him, consisting in the renouncing of personality and the blending of the individual with the One and All, the pious man, in his union with the Infinite and Eternal, enjoys while on earth everlasting life; and this notion of everlasting life he puts in direct contrast with that commonly entertained.

“I believe,” he says in his Discourses, “that I have fully set before you the manner in which every pious person bears about in himself an unchangeable and eternal existence. For when our feeling cleaves to nothing individual, but embraces as its sole object our relation to God, in which all that is individual and perishable is swallowed up, then is there nothing

Ibid., p. 117.

perishable in it, but only what is eternal ; and it may truly be said, that the religious life is that in which we have already sacrificed and renounced all that is mortal, and actually enjoy immortality. But the manner in which most men conceive of immortality, and their longing after it, appear to me irreligious, and directly contrary to the spirit of piety. Nay, their wish to be immortal has no other ground than an aversion to what is the aim of religion." The great aim of religion, he goes on to say, (as I formerly explained his doctrine,) is the divesting ourselves of our personality, and the becoming one with the Infinite. But those, he proceeds, who receive the common doctrine of immortality, struggle against this ; " they are anxiously concerned about their personality ; and thus, far from being willing to seize their only opportunity to rise superior to it, — that afforded them by death, — they are anxious how they shall take it with them beyond this life ; and aspire, at most, for eyes of wider vision and better limbs. But God speaks to them, as it is written, ' He who loses his life for my sake shall save it, and he who would save it shall lose it.' The life which they would preserve is one not to be preserved." — " The more they long after an immortality which is none, and which they are

not even capable of conceiving, (for who can succeed in the effort to represent to himself an existence in time as eternal?) the more they lose of that immortality which they might ever possess, and lose with it this mortal life, by indulging thoughts, that cause vain anxiety and distress.”* — “The aim and character of a re-

* Schleiermacher, as I have said, knew how to *mock with some lip-phrase*; and, conformably to this, he here introduces a passage, which it is proper to quote.

“He who has learned to be more than himself, knows that he loses little, when he loses himself. Only he, who, thus renouncing himself, has become blended, as far as in his power, with the whole Universe, and in whose soul a greater and holier desire has sprung up, — only he has a right to, and only with him may there really be, any further discourse of those hopes which death gives us, and of the immortality to which we may infallibly raise ourselves through it.”

It would be idle to inquire, what hopes and what immortality Schleiermacher would hold out to a being whose personal existence is to cease with death.

An expression which I have used above, in connexion with the whole subject, brings to my mind a passage of touching beauty from a late poem.

“Is it a boon, when Dissolution’s strife
Hangs — trembling — o’er the bed of Child or Wife,
And the fond Sufferer turns amid her pain,
And looks, and strives to say, ‘We meet again;’
Is it a boon to stand in anguish by,
And meet with some lip-phrase that clinging eye,
While the sad Skeptic Heart makes no reply?
Or, bending o’er the tomb to which she sank,
Present to feel — and Future — one mere Blank!”

KENYON’S *Rhymed Plea for Tolerance.*

ligious life is not such an immortality, as many wish for and believe in ; — or, perhaps, only pretend to believe in ; for their desire to know too much of it makes their belief very suspicious ; — not that immortality which is out of time and after time, or rather only after the present time, yet still in time ; but the immortality which already, in this temporal life, we may immediately possess, and which is a problem, in the solution of which we are continually engaged. In the midst of finiteness to become one with the Infinite, and to be eternal in every moment, — that is the immortality of religion.” *

Such is the conclusion of one of Schleiermacher's Discourses on Religion. In his note upon the passage I have quoted, he says, “I wish nothing more, than that every man may see himself not only divested of all the foreign apparel, for which he is indebted to the outward circumstances of life, but also after having laid aside these pretensions to an endless existence, in order that he may determine, when he regards himself such as he really is, whether these pretensions be any thing more, than such a title as the Mighty of the Earth often deck themselves with, to countries which they have never possessed, nor will possess.” †

* Reden über die Religion, pp. 118 – 121.

† Ibid., p. 141.

This last extract occurs about half a dozen lines before the passage of Schleiermacher, which is quoted in the pamphlet to prove that he cherished the Christian's hope of immortality.

Alike deceptive with the paragraph on which I have remarked, is another, in which the writer of the pamphlet professes to give a general account of Schleiermacher's opinions respecting Christianity.

“According to Schleiermacher, the revelation of God in nature, and in the human soul, is only a preparation for a perfect revelation through Christ. The purpose of God in the creation of man is completed in the Christian revelation. This is a new, original communication of divine truth, a fresh manifestation of the divine life in the person and works of Jesus Christ. He is appointed by God to be the Redeemer of the world ; hence he needed not redemption himself ; and, agreeably to the universal doctrine of the Church, was originally distinguished from all other men, and endowed with divine power from his birth.” — p. 142.

After the explanations already given of Schleiermacher's opinions, and the proofs that have been set forth, of the manner in which the pamphlet is written, it is not necessary to go to any length in remarking upon this paragraph. It may be sufficient to compare it with what has been already said. But I will add a few more illustrations of Schleiermacher's opinions. The passage naturally conveys the impression, that

he believed in the Christian revelation in the common sense of the words; in a miraculous revelation of God, through Christ, of the fundamental truths of religion. With this impression, may be compared the following passages from him.

“What is a miracle?” “A miracle is but the religious name for an event. Every one, the most natural and the most common, if it be of such a character, that it may be prevailingly viewed under a religious aspect, is a miracle. To me, all is miracle; and in your sense, as meaning something inexplicable and strange, only that is a miracle which is none in mine.”*

In his note on this passage,† added in the third edition, he says:

“The expression, that a *miracle* is but the religious name for an event in general, and thus, that all that happens is a miracle, may readily fall under the suspicion of being intended for a direct denial of any thing miraculous; for, to be sure, if every thing is a miracle, then, on the other hand, nothing is a miracle.”

The explanation of Schleiermacher is, that the distinction between the events which we call, and those which we do not call, miracles, is founded, not on any intrinsic difference, but

* Reden über die Religion, p. 105.

† Ibid., p. 135.

solely on the manner in which they are regarded by the human mind ; that, if we regard an event in immediate relation to the power of God, by which it is produced, that event is to us a miracle ; that, if we regard it as occurring in the ordinary course of nature, it is not a miracle. With these views, he says, that, in his " Doctrines of Faith," " notwithstanding the denial of absolute [proper] miracles, the religious interest in the miraculous is regarded and protected."

Revelation, in its religious sense, Schleiermacher explains to mean " every original and new communication of the universe, and of its inmost life, to man." * He who has not such revelations, " he who does not for himself see miracles from the point of view whence he contemplates the world," " who does not, in the most important moments, feel, with the most vivid conviction, that he is under the control of a divine spirit, and that he speaks and acts from a holy inspiration ; or who, at least, (for less than this is nothing,) is not conscious of his feelings as immediate influences of the universe, so as to recognise something peculiar in them that cannot be from imitation, but is a pledge of their pure source in his inmost nature, — he has no re-

* Ibid., pp. 105, 106.

ligion. To know one's self to be possessed of this, is the true faith. On the contrary, what is commonly called faith, the reception of what another has said or done, the being willing to think over and feel over again what another has thought and felt, is a hard and unworthy service; and instead of being, as men dream, what is highest in religion, must be discarded by every one who would penetrate into its sanctuary. To have and to hold such an imitative faith proves, that a man is incapable of religion; to seek his religion from others proves, that one does not understand what it is." Men must "stand on their own feet, go their own way," and "hearken to themselves," though, "with the exception of a few, select individuals, they need a guide and an exciter to awaken their sense of religion from its first slumber, and give it its first direction." Being thus awakened, "every one must then see, with his own eyes, and himself bring a contribution to the treasures of religion, or he deserves no place in her kingdom, and has none. Ye are right in thinking meanly of those poor repeaters of others' sayings, who derive their religion wholly from another, or attach themselves to the dead letter of a book, swear by it, and bring their proofs from it." *

* Reden über die Religion, pp. 107, 108.

I might adduce more to the same purpose. But what has been quoted can leave no intelligent man in doubt concerning Schleiermacher's opinions. He regarded that as no genuine religion which rests on external support, on faith in the revelation from God through Christ. The religious man, according to him, sees miracles for himself, has his own revelations, and his own inspiration. He needs no instructor, no external assurance of truth. Religion cannot be taught. To seek it from another proves that one knows not what it is.

I have thus, as far as the occasion required or admitted, given some account of the opinions of one, in whose works the writer of the pamphlet says, that "our studious young men, if they are inclined to German Rationalism, will find a corrective;"* and of whom he adds, that "there are many who will welcome the principles of his school as the vital, profound, and ennobling theology which they have earnestly sought for, but hitherto sought in vain."†

One more charge of error respecting Schleiermacher remains to be noticed.

In the first note to my Discourse,‡ I have

* Pamphlet, p. 140.

† Ib. p. 149.

‡ p. 45.

said, incidentally, for the purpose of explaining a quotation, that "the disciples of the new school are in Germany called Rationalists or Naturalists." The term *Rationalist* occurs nowhere else, either in my Discourse, or in the notes to it. But the author of the pamphlet represents me as having committed an "extraordinary error," a "whimsical mistake," in having classed Schleiermacher with Rationalists or Naturalists. "He was," says the writer, "a strenuous advocate of the supernatural origin of Christianity." *

It is unnecessary to add any thing to the evidence already adduced, to show how deceived a reader would be, who should understand these words in their ordinary sense and implication.

"His whole life," says the writer of the pamphlet, "was a controversy against the Rationalist school." The writer quotes Röhr, a Rationalist, to prove his "hatred to Rationalism," and Lücke, (whom he calls orthodox,) to show that it received from him "a deadly wound." †

These statements are adapted to lead the readers of the pamphlet to suppose, that Schleiermacher was a strenuous defender of

* Pamphlet, pp. 138, 139.

† Ibid., p. 139.

Christianity as a miraculous revelation (in the proper sense of the words), and a zealous opponent of those who denied its claims to divine authority. The writer would be understood as using the word *Rationalist* in its widest acceptation, as equivalent to *Naturalist*, (with which term I connected it,) that is, as denoting one who, rejecting revelation, founds his faith on natural religion. But, in the quotations from Röhr and Lücke, it is used in a restricted sense, to denote those holding the principles, and retaining the character, of the *earlier* German Rationalists, to whom the name was first given; and Schleiermacher's controversy with them was consistent, as I am about to show, with his having as little belief as they had in the divine authority of our religion.

Speaking of De Wette, the writer of the pamphlet says:

"I ought not, perhaps, to leave this topic, without showing the injustice you have been guilty of, in classing De Wette with the Naturalist school. To do this, I should need only to adduce passages from almost any one of his writings; but I am spared the task, by the careful and discriminating account of De Wette's theology, which is already before the public in one of our religious Journals [*The Christian Examiner*]."—pp. 153, 154.

Before meeting with this reference, I was not

aware of the existence of such an account. But it has been a convenience to me to be referred to it, as affording an undisputed authority, and one which, *so far as I shall quote it*, I believe to be essentially correct.

De Wette says, as translated in this article : *

“It is not long since Jacobi, Fries, and Schleiermacher have discovered this truth, and it is by far from being universally acknowledged, that faith lies originally in feeling, is nothing but feeling brought forth into clear consciousness. These men were the first who pointed out in the human mind an original principle, a faith or religious feeling, which precedes every perception of the understanding, and they therefore assigned to every such perception a subordinate place. The penetrating Hamann alone had earlier indicated the same principle.”

Of the controversy between this school and that of the earlier Rationalists, De Wette gives the following account.†

“The opposite party, the Rationalists, most violently oppose the doctrine of the origin of religion in feeling, and on the ground, that they deduce every thing in religion from the understanding, and judge all truths by the understanding merely. They mark our doctrine with the opprobrious name of Mysticism. We are very well

* Christian Examiner, for May, 1838, p. 155.

† Ibid., p. 163.

satisfied with this name, if it is taken in its original signification. Mystic means mysterious, sacred to or significant of him initiated into mysteries, belonging to mystery. According to what we deem the just view, there is in the human mind something dark and mysterious, accessible only to the faithful heart, and from which the clear light of the understanding is excluded; this view may be called Mysticism. In general, every feeling is mystical, because that as such it cannot be clearly conceived of; a doctrine, therefore, which places religion in feeling, may be well called mystical. But if those are called Mystics, who, disinclined to clearness of understanding, withdraw religion from all free investigation and scientific treatment, and would surrender themselves utterly to obscure feelings, then we justly refuse this epithet, since we, quite as much as the boasted Rationalists, are champions of free thinking on all subjects of faith. We distinguish ourselves from these theologians, in that we do not, like them, regard the perceptive understanding or critical intellect as the fountain of religion, nor as the highest aim of religious culture, but deem it subordinate to feeling."

This was the point at issue between the "Mystics," including Schleiermacher, and the earlier Rationalists. But whether religion is to be founded upon the understanding alone, or the feelings alone, whether its truths are only to be reasoned out, or only to be felt out, the authority of revelation, as teaching the fundamental facts of religion, is equally rejected.

I have not remarked on every thing in the ac-

count of Schleiermacher given in the pamphlet, that may lead the reader into error; for it would have been trifling and wearisome to do so; but enough, I trust, has been said to show what degree of confidence may be reposed in the representations of the writer. In the conclusion of his account, he quotes various passages from Ullmann, whose religious character I suppose to be different from that of Schleiermacher, to prove what Schleiermacher believed, by showing what Ullmann believes. It must be obvious to every one, that if the writer had been able to produce any thing to his purpose from Schleiermacher's own writings, he would not have had recourse to such indirect evidence.

I now come to the criticisms of the writer of the pamphlet on my translations from

DE WETTE.*

These criticisms he regards as likely to affect my reputation seriously. He asserts, that in twenty-one lines, I have committed fourteen errors; but, as he specifies only those in four passages, it is only on them I can remark.

* Pamphlet, pp. 149 seqq.

I.

I translated thus : *

— the essence of what is proposed for religious faith “is not in propositions which are *objects of knowledge*, but in a *pious apprehension of things*, purified and enlightened by knowledge.” †

The writer of the pamphlet translates : ‡

— “its essence is not in *scientific propositions*, but in the *pious consciousness*, purified and enlightened by the influence of science.”

Having quoted the words of De Wette as an example of vague and unmeaning language, I felt myself bound to translate them into as plausible English as I could command. It would have been easy to render the disputed clause verbally thus :

“The essence of the doctrines of faith does not consist in scientific propositions, but in a pious apprehension of things, scientifically purified and enlightened.”

And, strange as this sounds in English, I do

* Discourse, pp. 40, 41.

† — “ihr Wesen nicht in wissenschaftlichen Sätzen, sondern in dem wissenschaftlich gereinigten und erleuchteten frommen Bewusstseyn besteht.”

‡ Pamphlet, p. 151.

not know why the original is not as strange in German. But in order to preserve the antithesis with which the sentence concludes, without the baldness of expression, I substituted for "scientific propositions," what I supposed to be, as the words were used, an equivalent term, "propositions which are objects of knowledge." Scientific propositions are propositions which are objects of knowledge; and whether, in changing one term for the other, I did any injustice to De Wette, may be judged of by the following extracts from the article on his theology, before referred to, in the *Christian Examiner*.

There are, according to De Wette, "three modes of conviction of which man is capable, — *Knowledge, Faith, Sentiment*." "The second mode of conviction, *faith*, cannot, like the first, be called knowledge, without confounding terms, and designating things opposite by the same name. It is by rising above worldly knowledge, that cannot satisfy us, that we soar to this lofty faith." As for religious *sentiment*, "as soon as it is excited, the reign of actual knowledge ceases, the critical intellect should hold reverent silence." "*Faith and sentiment* belong to religion, but positive knowledge is a stranger to it." *

* *Christian Examiner*, for May, 1838; pp. 158 – 160.

The account, given in the pamphlet, of the manner in which the passage translated is introduced, is altogether a misrepresentation. The two leading ideas by which it is preceded are, that "faith, as such, is free from doubt;" and that, when "we come to treat of convictions concerning what man *sees not and yet believes*, or supernatural objects of faith, doubts enough arise which are opposed to faith."

By way of correcting my translation, the writer of the pamphlet renders the German word *Bewusstsein*, "consciousness." The word has a nebulous meaning, of which that of "consciousness" forms only the nucleus. It comprehends, also, the senses of "perception"; of "reflection," in its metaphysical use; of "intuition"; and of "knowledge," in its stricter sense.* De Wette, in the passage in question,

* It is defined by Heinsius, in his large Dictionary of the German language, which I suppose the best, to be "the state in which a man has knowledge of himself and other things," — "der Zustand, da man sich seiner und anderer Dinge bewusst ist;" and in the Conversations-Lexicon, to be "a knowledge of being," — "Wissen um das Sein." In the latter work, it is said, "The first degree of knowledge (*Bewusstsein*) is immediate or sensible knowledge (*Bewusstsein*), the perception (*Bewusstsein*) of objects, and, in its developement, of the external world;" "Die erste Stufe des *Bewusstseins* ist das unmittelbare oder sinnliche *Bewusstsein*, das *Bewusstsein* der Objecte, und in seiner Ausbildung der Aussenwelt."

Strauss, speaking of the theological system of Horst, one of those

intends by it, I presume, the supposed "feeling," or direct perception, of religious truth, which lies at the foundation of his system. We have no word in English specifically denoting this imaginary faculty, and perhaps the term I used, "apprehension of things," in the connexion in which it stands, comes as near the meaning as any that could have been employed. On the other hand, *consciousness* denotes a "knowledge of what passes in one's own mind,"* or a knowledge of the present state of one's own mind. This has been its well-settled, and is, I conceive, its only proper meaning. Taking it in this meaning, it will appear, that De Wette has not gained in clearness or sense by the new translation, which makes him say, that "the essence of the doctrines of faith consists in the pious knowledge of what passes in one's own mind," &c.

I am aware, that in some of the incorrect writing of the day, the word "consciousness"

symbolical expositions of the history of Christ, which prepared the way for his own, says, (Das Leben Jesu, II. 760,) "Diese Ansicht traf zunächst von Seiten des kirchlichen Bewusstseins der Vorwurf," &c., where *Bewusstsein*, I suppose, may be represented in English by "conception." "On the side of the conception of the Church, this view encountered the objection," &c.

* Locke and Johnson.

has before been used in a wide and vague sense, as it is by the writer of the pamphlet. This has been caused, I think, by the influence of German speculations and phraseology. In the German language, as must be evident to one accustomed to think with precision, the significations of many words are more unsteady and uncertain, than in our own, or in the southern languages of Europe. Their outline is undefined and varying. They have not been determined to precise meanings by habits of accurate usage, and associations long connected with them. They do not, equally as with us, when standing in certain relations to other words and ideas, present invariably and instantaneously the true sense required by the connexion. The associations and implications connected with one signification of a word become confused with those connected with another; and even significations widely distinct are confounded together. Thus, to illustrate from the word immediately before us:—“Consciousness,” as properly used, implies certain knowledge; but *Bewusstsein* answers, in one of its meanings, to “consciousness”; in another, it is employed, as we have seen, to denote a supposed faculty of immediately perceiving the facts of religion; and to this supposed faculty,

as being denoted by the same name, the idea of certainty, belonging to the first signification, is transferred. To take another example, equally to our purpose: — The same word in German, *Wunder*, signifies either a *miracle*, or merely a *wonder*, a “wonderful natural object or event”; and the rejection, by the German Naturalists, of the miraculous character of Christianity has been facilitated, perhaps, by nothing more than by the ease with which they could pass from one of these very distinct meanings to the other, on account of their being both expressed by the same word.* But, as I have formerly remarked,† almost all the words expressive of ideas of revealed religion have admitted of being abused in a similar manner; and this abuse, as may be seen by such productions as the pamphlet under notice, is making inroads upon our own language. It is necessary jealously to guard it; or its whole meaning in

* I may give one example from the science of metaphysics. Each of the German words *sinnlich* and *sensual* combines the meanings of “sensible,” (that is, “belonging to,” or “perceptible by the senses,”) and of “sensual”; and these two meanings have been confounded together. It has been attempted to introduce into our language the barbarism of using “sensual,” as if it meant sensible, or founded on the senses; and we have heard, in consequence, through a series of errors, of the *sensual* philosophy of Locke.

† Discourse, p. 10.

the higher departments of thought will be broken down, the cultivation and growth of centuries will be destroyed, and it will be reduced to a waste, in which the wildest speculations may flourish. But this is a digression, suggesting many thoughts that cannot be pursued. I must return to smaller matters.

II.

According to my translation,* De Wette says :

We should not rest “the truth of Christian faith, *as if it were a duty so to do*,† upon common, naked, historical truth.”

According to the writer of the pamphlet :

We should not rest “the truth of Christian faith upon common, naked, historical truth, *as if it were a legal title*.” ‡

This sentence, as every one perceives, is, in itself, unintelligible. De Wette, as the writer of the pamphlet remarks, alludes, in the four words in question, (*etwa wie ein recht*,) to what he had said, some pages before, that “the historical faith of Christians, according to the old system, rests on the Bible, very much as the common civil law is founded on the *Corpora*

* Discourse, p. 41.

† — “*etwa wie ein Recht*.”

‡ Pamphlet, p. 152.

Juris."* His full meaning, therefore, would be thus expressed: We should not rest the truth of Christian faith upon common, naked, historical truth; as if it were the duty of a Christian to refer to the history of Christianity to settle his faith, as it is the duty of a lawyer, where the civil law is in use, to refer to the *Corpora Juris* to settle the law. The *allusion* is of no importance, and could not have been expressed intelligibly without substituting an explanation for a proper rendering. The whole essential *meaning* of De Wette is given in my translation.

III.

I rendered De Wette, thus: †

The new rational theology must "renounce what has hitherto been customary, the poor and unscientific appeal to miraculous evidence." ‡

The writer of the pamphlet translates:

—"renounce the miserable and unscientific mode of conducting the argument from miracles, that has hitherto been used." §

The point made is this; that the original of

* Pamphlet, p. 152.

† Discourse, p. 42.

‡ "Insbesondere verzichte sie auf die bisher gewöhnliche so kleinliche und unwissenschaftliche Führung des Wunderbeweises."

§ Pamphlet, p. 152.

De Wette, like the latter translation, leaves an opening for the supposition, that he believed, that there was some mode of conducting the argument from miracles, that had *not* "hitherto been used," or rather, that had not "hitherto been customary," by which it might be made available. It did not occur to me, in translating, that this point would be raised by any one, or I might have been more scrupulously literal. A transposition would have saved me from remark. If I had rendered thus : — "to renounce that poor and unscientific appeal to (*verbally*, management of,) miraculous evidence which has hitherto been customary," — my translation would have had all the *verbal ambiguity* of the original. But, whatever equivocal language any expositor of De Wette may employ, it is undeniable, that, according to his views, what we regard as the miraculous evidence of Christianity, is of no value.

The system of De Wette I conceive to be this. The truths of religion are immediately perceived or, as he expresses it, felt by the mind. They need, or rather admit of, no other evidence than this intuitive perception. This alone affords that certainty which is necessary to faith. Faith cannot rest on reasoning, or external testimony, or historical knowledge; for

all these sources of evidence necessarily involve doubt. The connexion between faith and historical Christianity consists in the fact, that the influence and spirit of those truths, which are internally perceived by faith, were perfectly developed in Christ, the pattern, or model, man, the God-man; who founded a community to which he transmitted that influence and spirit, and in which they have continued to be developed. His history is properly no object of religious faith. No new warranty of those truths is given by their having been taught by him. The earlier Christians did not believe them for this reason.* The outline of his history is true; but, as regards the accounts in the Gospels, there is much that is questionable, when critically examined. These accounts are to be regarded rather morally and spiritually, than in their literal meaning. They are to be viewed as symbolical of the *ideal* in religion, by which

* Speaking of the earliest times of Christianity, he says: "The warranty of these truths did not consist in their having been taught by Christ; for how seldom does the Apostle Paul appeal to the declarations of Christ." "A properly historical knowledge and examination of what Christ may have taught belonged not at all to the conditions of the original Christian faith." The last sentence is distinguished as emphatic by the mode of printing in the original.— See the article by De Wette, in Ullmann and Umbreit's Journal, (formerly quoted by me,) pp. 143, 144.

De Wette seems generally to mean the universal truths of religion, or what relates to them. The accounts may thus have abstract truth without historical reality ; and, apart from all inquiry into their authenticity, may serve for spiritual edification. The ascription of a symbolical character to the Gospel history is a distinguishing characteristic of the opinions of De Wette ; and, in adopting and applying this principle, he is one of the writers who have prepared the way for the extravagances of Strauss, of which I formerly made some mention.* Agreeably to this theory, the miracles of Christ, whether true or not, may be regarded as symbolical. They may be resolved into the *ideal*.

“The original, innocent belief in miracles,” † says De Wette, “was nothing but a branch of the moral faith, that a man with purer, diviner power of spirit and life, the pure, ideal man had appeared, — a faith that needed not for its assurance any speculative historical proof, but simply the practical proof from the excitement and direction of life received from him.” ‡

I quote another connected passage of some

* Discourse, pp. 46, 47.

† “Der ursprüngliche, unschuldige Wunderglaube.”

‡ Article by De Wette, (before quoted,) p. 145.

length, which it would be easy to compress, but which it may be more satisfactory to have in his own words.

“The historical circumstances immediately connected with the death of Christ were but incidental, and were believed more on account of their inward significance, than on account of the outward phenomenon, which, beside, did not demand historical investigation. This was more demanded by the fact of the Resurrection, as being in the highest degree marvellous and incomprehensible. Is one disposed to a physical investigation of it, the question arises respecting the possibility of such a fact, which breaks in upon our theoretical knowledge of the relations of nature. Thus it is known what a stumbling-block it has been in our times; so that the credibility of the event has been subjected to a strict examination, and attempts have been made to prove or disprove its possibility according to the laws of physiology. To this investigation, the first Christians were not disposed; and there are no clear traces, that doubts concerning this wonderful fact were openly avowed, and became a subject of attention. Manifestly in the view of the Apostles, the *ideal* aspect of it was, sometimes at least, the prevailing one, and always a principal con-

sideration. It is known, that the apostle Paul so closely connects the truth of our own resurrection with that of Christ's resurrection, that they must stand or fall together. But if we receive the resurrection of Christ as a physical, historical fact, there is, according to this doctrinal view, so important a difference between it and the general resurrection hoped for, that this connexion ceases to be tenable. For, according to the clear accounts in the Gospels, the body of Christ, after his resurrection, was of an earthly, tangible nature, so that he even took food. But we cannot ascribe such a body to those who rise from the dead, without falling into the grossest contradictions; and Paul himself did not conceive of the body that was to rise as so material. Thus it is clear, that the Apostle regarded the fact of Christ's resurrection, apart from any consideration of the physical, historical *How*, as a pledge of the *ideal* truth, that we shall rise from the dead, and consequently more under its *ideal* than *real* aspect. Accordingly, nothing more remains for pure Christian faith, than that, in the historical experiences of the Apostle concerning Jesus, there was an event which appeared to him the *realization* of the truth of the future resurrection of the good, — a truth which be-

fore had been believed only *ideally*, but was now apprehended *really*.* The inquiry, what was the character of this fact, as regards its physical and historical relations, does not properly belong to the province of Christian faith."†

I suppose every intelligent reader is satisfied, that I did no injustice to De Wette, in representing him as rejecting the miraculous evidence of Christianity. It would be inconsistent, not only with his views of the accounts of miracles in the Gospels, but with what is fundamental in his system, to believe him to attach any value to those accounts, as affording proof of the facts on which religion is founded.

The writer of the pamphlet, however, says :

"You make him say, that the argument from miracles should be renounced ; he actually says, that it should not be conducted in the miserable and unscientific mode that has been usual. The importance of this is deeply felt by many theologians beside De Wette. Still they value the miracles, when presented in their true light. They would not renounce all appeal to the evidence derived from them. Neither would De Wette. His writings are full of examples to show the power with which the Divinity of Christ is illustrated by his miracles." — pp. 152, 153.

* — "der vorher nur ideal geglaubten, nun real gefassten Wahrheit."

† Ibid., pp. 146, 147.

In the last sentence, the word "illustrated" occurs, where the purpose of the argument appears to require "proved"; but the writer, I suppose, was aware, that the latter word could not be correctly used. Miracles, symbolized into the *ideal*, may illustrate any thing, but can prove nothing. The short preceding sentence, according to which, De Wette "would not renounce all appeal to miraculous *evidence*," seems to have been more carelessly written, if it is to be understood in the common sense of the words.

IV.

"The last office of the new Rational theology," says De Wette, according to my translation,* "is to make the might of the community of Christians again effective, and to plant faith in living power in the living life."

This is explained by the following passages in the article quoted. The main thing, according to De Wette, in historical Christianity, "manifestly is, that Christ, the central point or author of a new, holy, blessed life, a man furnished with all the qualities necessary for the work of salvation and redemption, as

* Discourse, p. 42.

wisdom, spiritual power, purity, and union with God, or, in other words, the God-man, truly lived, worked, *founded a new and holy community, and bequeathed to it his divine spirit.*" *

"The Christian should not believe in the Bible, but in Christ. He should not learn his convictions from a book, but win them with a lively inspiration in life and through life. *The reigning spirit in the Church, the faith that prevails in it, the warm vital breath of love that dwells in it, should seize upon and penetrate whoever enters it as a member.* The Bible should, indeed, be used and read, but not that faith may be properly founded upon it, or first derived from it." †

I add one quotation from the account of De Wette in "The Christian Examiner." ‡

"The kingdom of God, as a purely holy and blessed community of spirit, began at the moment when Christ, as a divine intelligence and sinless man, was recognised as the beginning and head of this kingdom, and those acknowledging him gathered in faith and love around his person. *And what Christ did for*

* Article by De Wette, before quoted, p. 143.

† Ibid., p. 149.

‡ For September, 1838; p. 17.

the foundation of his kingdom on earth consists in this, that he established this moral and religious community, through which the Eternal Spirit is realized upon earth. This community is in will and deed; and has no other form than life itself, and an historical connexion with its founder."

The words which I rendered as before given, are thus translated and commented on by the writer of the pamphlet.

"De Wette actually says, that 'an improved theology should restore the *importance of Christian communion* and plant faith in its vital power in actual life.'

"The ordinances of the church have fallen into unmerited neglect; an improved theology would give them a new significance; excite a deeper interest in their observance; and restore them to their place in the concerns of life, and the affections of Christians. This is a favorite idea with De Wette, and one surely which calls for no very severe condemnation." — p. 153.

I suppose, that from this translation and comment most readers, unacquainted with the German, may have received the impression, that by the word (*Gemeinschaft*) which I have translated "community," and he has translated "communion," is meant the communion of our Lord's Supper. They will, therefore, be

surprised to learn, what every one acquainted with the German knows, that the word has not that meaning; that the writer of the pamphlet does not suppose it to have that meaning; and that the passage has no more reference to the ordinances of the Church than it appears to have in my translation. It is impossible to say, therefore, what representation he would *directly* oppose to my translation of the passage, which I have already explained and justified.

I have now, I believe, said all that is necessary to defend myself against the charges of error brought against me; and in the Preliminary Observations, I have taken notice of every thing else in the pamphlet which seemed to me to deserve consideration. It has appeared in those observations, that what there is relating to the main subject of my Discourse is founded upon an entire misconception of the state of the argument. Should the writer of the pamphlet attempt a reply to what I have said, perhaps I may remark on it; for circumstances which I cannot foresee may render it proper for me to do so; but at present I think it very im-

probable that I shall. The expositions which I have made in these Remarks, though relating to subjects not familiar to most men's thoughts, are such, I believe, as may be fully understood by every intelligent reader. Whatever representations, therefore, the writer of the pamphlet may hereafter bring forward, or whatever confidence he may assume, every such reader can judge of the degree of credit to which he is entitled; and, should I take no further notice of what he may affirm or imply, no one will suppose in consequence, that I admit its correctness.

I should regret exceedingly, if the irrelevant topics, that occupy the greater part of these pages, should become blended with the consideration of the momentous subject which I endeavoured to treat in the Discourse, on which the writer of the pamphlet remarks. In that Discourse, I wrote as a Christian, feeling the inestimable value of Christianity as a divine revelation, — not in the sense of those who may quibble and say, that this, or that, or every thing, is a revelation of God, — but in the true sense in which a Christian uses the words. This, however, is not the place to resume the sub-

ject, and I have only to repeat my hope, that attention may not be diverted from it by the incidental discussion that has arisen out of what I have written concerning it.

Cambridge Theology school
Unitarian

Norton, Andrews

Remarks on a Pamphlet entitled 'The latest form of infidelity examined'

Cambridge 1839

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